

The Ryhiner Collection - a scientific indexing project

The Map Collection as a Research Site

The Bernese statesman and geographer Johann Friedrich von Ryhiner (1732-1803) defined maps as being an aid to the further development of the science of geography. He, therefore, took it upon himself to establish a respective instrument of research in Berne. In consequence, Ryhiner assembled a worldwide geographic collection based on scientific criteria comprising approximately 16,000 maps, plans and topographical views from the 16th to the 18th century.

In 1867, the Collection was donated to the Municipality Library Berne as a gift and today counts as one of the most valuable, privately assembled map collections of the 18th century. It is essential that this important cultural inheritance be preserved, be made accessible and be used.

The Indexing Project

Since February 1994, the Collection has been in the process of being made accessible as the result of a project which is to continue for four and a half years.

This project includes, in particular, measures for the preservation of the Collection (restoration, coloured microfilming), as well as the creation of a database which is to be accessible to the public.

The project, which is being financed by the Bernese Lottery Fund, is being carried out as a joint venture between the Institute of Geography (Prof. Dr. Klaus Aerni) and the Municipal and University Library Berne (Prof. Dr. Robert Barth) with the advisory support of the State Archives (Dr. Karl Wälchli). Dr. Thomas Klöti was appointed to lead the project, assisted by qualified library staff.

The accession work joins the ranks of similar carto-bibliographic projects which are currently being carried out, for example, in Germany. As a result of the bibliothecal, restorative and indexing work now in progress, a rich source of material is being made accessible for research.

The Database

A wealth of geographic and culture-historic knowledge is recorded in the maps, plans and views of the Ryhiner Collection which can be approached from the most diverse angles.

The accessioning of the Collection is being carried out on "SIBIL", that is, in the EDP library catalogue of the Swiss-German Library Association Basle-Berne (Deutschschweizer Bibliotheksverbund Basel-Bern - DSV), where the following sections of the Collection have already been recorded (status as of October 1996): astronomical and world maps and oceanic charts, as well as Europe, Africa and Australia. The maps of America and Asia are currently in preparation.

Usage and Stock Preservation

As the existence of the Collection becomes more widely known and as a result of the listing of the stock, it is inevitable that usage will increase.

Particular emphasis is, therefore, being placed on the concept of usage and restoration and it is here that the know-how of the State Archives Berne and the Association for Paper Restoration Berne (AGPB - Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Papierrestauration Bern) can be profited from. The restoration measures are being carried out in the studio of the Municipal and University Library Berne. With regard to cultural asset security, a coloured microfilm of the entire Collection is being made using the Ilfochrome-Micrographic process. In each case two pictures are being taken. The security copy will be stored in a security vault and the working copy will be presented to the user in place of the original map. The selected procedure is resistant to aging and achieves a colour reproduction of the highest quality. The microfilm provides a vast store for information. The photography laboratory Gubler, in Märstetten has been entrusted with the performance of this procedure as they have the necessary experience in this field. The coloured microfilm can also be scanned as an intermediate copy, thereby making all the variations of the further use of digital images possible. For clarification of this project we are currently in contact with the Scientific Photography Lab in Basle (PD Dr. Rudolf Gschwind).

Publication of Results

Various options, (a printed catalogue, microfiche, CD-ROM etc.,) are open for the publication of the database, with or without illustrations. However, this has yet to be realised pending the outcome of a separate, still to be negotiated finance plan. A decision as to whether and in which form the database of the Ryhiner Collection will be published has, as yet, not been made. For the time being, further technical and financial developments will be observed and the feasibility, as well as the demand for the various facilities, investigated.

The following is intended to demonstrate how new network technology is being applied for the purposes of our indexing project, for example, how the facilities of Internet are being actively used for the distribution of results, as well as for the necessary research in related databases (e.g., IKAR - the database for historic maps of the German Library Institute DBI).

The Internet

The virtual mobility shows extremely high growth rates. Internet connects computers and, therefore, also people and their information. The same "language" is spoken throughout Internet (TCP/IP-Protocol), and programs for the exchange of files, for the connection to other computers, for search programs etc., are available. Data is stored decentrally and the art lies in establishing those linkages which will provide the required information. The World Wide Web (WWW), which integrates many of the Internet services on one surface, is currently experiencing a considerable upward trend. The WWW is based on hyperlink technology, which means that every word or picture in a document can, theoretically, be connected to any other. With a mouse-click on the hyperlink the connection is activated and the chosen document shown, wherever its location in the world may be.

The Swiss Academic and Research Network SWITCH, for example, offers a simple access to Swiss libraries which are represented on the WWW (URL-Address: <<http://www.switch.ch/libraries>>. The dial-in on-line catalogues are listed under the URL-Address: <<http://www.switch.ch/libraries/cat-lib.html>>.)

With Internet and access to all information available on the network, it is possible to participate and contribute information personally. Access to the pages is via the WWW server of the Municipal and University Library Berne (URL-Address: <<http://www.stub.unibe.ch/stub/stub.html>>) or directly with <<http://www.stub.unibe.ch/stub/ryhiner/ryhiner.html>>.

The Ryhiner Collection Homepage

Since 2nd February 1995, the Ryhiner Collection offers a "mooring" on the Internet. How did this come about? In the autumn of 1994 we received the first account on the central VMS equipment of the University of Berne, from the information services. And so began our voyage of discovery. We also corresponded via e-mail and subscribed to subject specific, electronically connected discussion groups for map historians and map librarians (e.g., Maphist, maps-l, lis-maps, Carta). Whilst navigating around the World Wide Web (WWW), we also came across several North American map collections. Further impetus was generated by the conference "Digitale Karten in Bibliotheken" (Digital Maps in Libraries), which was organised, in September 1994, by the "Groupe des carto-thécaires de LIBER (Ligue Internationale des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche)" at the ETH (Federal University of Technology) in Zürich. We now realised that theory had to be put into practice. A vast amount of EDP know-how was already available at the Municipality and University Library Berne and we also found competent contacts in the information services at the University of Berne. The groundwork was carried out by Caroline Hablützel, who familiarised herself with the "Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML)" and made her newly acquired knowledge available to us.

The result can be summarised as follows:

The Collection and the project are briefly introduced on the WWW Homepage. From here further links to information (such as texts regarding the indexing project, the microfilming and restoration of the Collection), to the database (Catalogue of the Swiss-German Library Association Basle-Berne, DSV, digital picture archive with several examples of scanned maps, index of map originators), as well as to the personal WWW pages of the project team, are available. The offer of the Ryhiner Collection is part of a global network. For this reason links were established to topic related Homepage providers on the Internet who are, for example, in North America, in the Netherlands or in Switzerland.

Outlook

In spite of all the Internet euphoria, sight must not be lost of the many questions (e.g., those regarding the archiving of digital data) which have as yet not been answered satisfactorily. Furthermore, due to the rapid succession of new innovations computer technology is oriented to short periods of use. In contrast, easy accessibility, manifold possibilities and unlimited usage time, makes data on paper a valuable and not to be underestimated factor. This should be taken into consideration when the final decision, as to whether the database currently in preparation should also be made available in a printed form, is made.

Geological Maps

In the Bernese libraries and archives (Municipal and University Library Berne, Sectional Library Bühlplatz etc.) are important stocks of geological maps. Amongst these, for example, is the first geological map of Switzerland from Carles Gimbernath (1803). The Ryhiner Collection also includes several early geological maps which were published in printed form. These can be called up worldwide from our catalogue which is available on-line (tn3270://as3.afibs.ch).

Below are the titles of a number of maps which have a geological connection:

- Carte des pays qu'occupe maintenant la Mer Méditerranée (Kartenmaterial) : depuis l'époque où l'océan séparant l'Afrique de l'Espagne forma le détroit de Gibraltar et inonda les pays qui forment aujourd'hui cette mer / par M. de Laborde. - (S.l.): (s.n.), (1785?). -
- La France mineralogique (Kartenmaterial). - (Paris) : (Mondhare), (1780).
- Die Eisgebyrge des Schweizerlandes, mit allen dabey vorkommenden Mineralien (Kartenmaterial) / in ihrem Zusam(m)enhang vorgestellt von G. S. Gruner ; gezeichnet und gegraben in Paris von A. Zingg. - (Bern) : (s.n.), (1760). -
- Petrographische Landkarte des Hochstifts Fuld (Kartenmaterial) / gezeichnet von J. C. W. Voigt ; gestochen von J. C. Berndt in Franckfurt am Mayn. - (Frankfurt a. M.): (s.n.), 1782. -
- Petrographische Carte des Harz Gebirges (Kartenmaterial) / aufgenommen und gezeichnet von Georg Sigismund Otto Lasius chur hannoverischem Ingenieur Lieutenant ; gestochen von George Tischbein. - (S.l.): (s.n.), 1789. -
- (Alpkarte) (Kartenmaterial) / Fr. X. Baraga Ing. del. Labaci 1778 ; J. Adam sculp. - (Leipzig) : (Breitkopf), 1778. -
- Mappa litho=hydrographica nationis Slavicae ad occidentem solem sitae (Kartenmaterial) / gezeichnet von Lieber zu Laibach a.o 1782 ; J. Adam sc. - (Leipzig) : (Breitkopf), 1782. -
- Carte du gouvernement d'Aigle (Kartenmaterial) : avec des explications petrographiques / levée topographiquement par Mr. de Roverea, pere, et réduit par Mr. J. Sam. Grouner ; gravé par Joseph Clausner à Zoug. - (Genève) : (s.n.), (1788). -

The last map was also produced as a facsimile by the publishers Cartographica Helvetica. It is an important document with regard to Bernese salt mining and the history of Swiss maps.

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Bibliography:

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Thomas Klöti: Die „Carte des principales Routes de la Suisse ...“ von Johann Georg Heinzmann als topographische Grundlage der ersten geologischen Karte der Schweiz von Charles Gimbernath (1803). Eclogae geologicae Helvetiae 79, 1986, 1-12.

Thomas Klöti: Karten in der Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Bern - Die Erschliessung der Sammlung Ryhiner. Berner Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Heimatkunde 56, 1994, 179-189.

Thomas Klöti: Making the Ryhiner Collection Accessible - World Wide Web as possible aid in the provision and distribution of old maps. Abstracts, Curricula vitae. 16th International Conference on the History of Cartography. Vienna. 11-16 September 1995, 97-98.

Thomas Klöti: Der virtuelle Atlas: Die Sammlung Ryhiner sowie weitere kartengeschichtlich interessante Anlegestellen im Internet. In: Cartographica Helvetica 12, 1995, 45-47.

Hans A. Michel: Die Kartensammlung Ryhiner der Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Bern - eine bibliothekarische, technische und wissenschaftliche Erschliessungs- und Konservierungsaufgabe. Jahrbuch der Geographischen Gesellschaft von Bern 55, 1983-1985, 589-599.

Karl F. Wälchli und Guido Voser: Die Sammlung von Karten und Plänen im Berner Staatsarchiv. Cartographica Helvetica 4, 1991, 35-39.

Jahrbuch der Geographischen Gesellschaft Bern, 58 (1992-1993), Bern 1994

Johann Friedrich von Ryhiner (1732-1803) - Berner Staatsmann, Geograph, Kartenbibliograph und Verkehrspolitiker

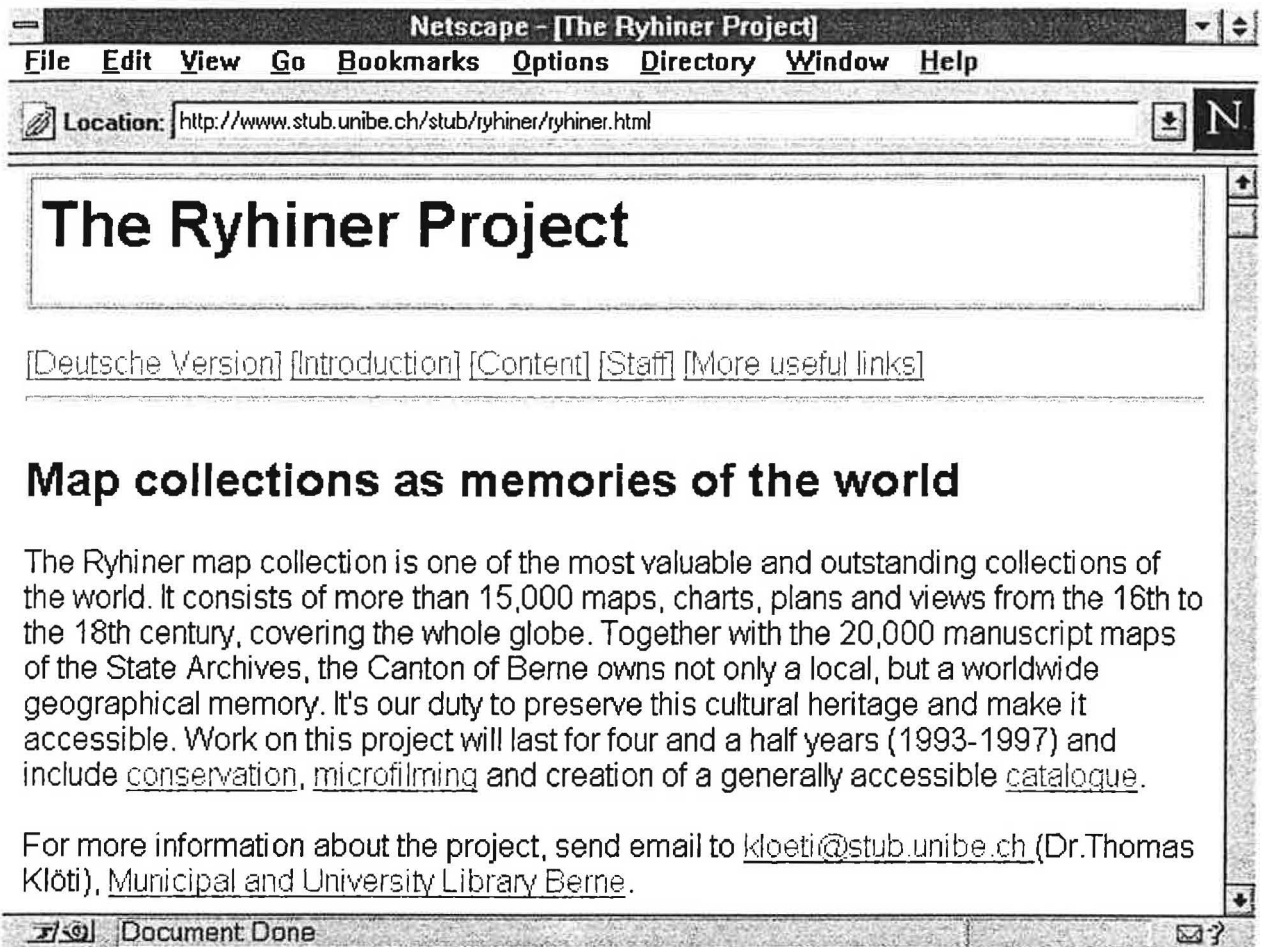
by Thomas Klöti

In this work, the result of a dissertation, the Bernese patrician Johann Friedrich von Ryhiner is portrayed monographically for the first time. The book is divided into four main sections: "The Statesman", "The Geographer", "The Map Librarian" and "The Communication Politician."

This substantial volume includes 80 illustrations and is available from the Geographic Society Berne, Hallerstrasse 12, CH-3012 Berne. Price: Sfr.60.-

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The dial-in on-line catalogue <tn3270://as3.afibs.ch/>



The Ryhiner Collection Homepage <<http://www.stub.unibe.ch/stub/ryhiner/ryhiner.html>>

Faksimile-Ausgaben

aus dem Verlag CARTOGRAPHICA HELVETICA

Aigle

Bedeutendes Dokument zum bernischen Salzbergbau und zur schweizerischen Kartengeschichte.

Carte du gouvernement d'Aigle
1:60 000, 1788

Frühe moderne Karte eines Teilgebietes der Schweiz. Die originale Messtischaufnahme (1:9000) von Isaac-Gamaliel de Rovérea stammt aus der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts. Die Reduktion (1:60 000) erfolgte durch Johann Samuel Gruner, der Kartenkupferstich durch Joseph Clausner.

Faksimile-Ausgabe: einfarbiger Offsetdruck
Büttenpapier 145 g/m²

Kartenformat: 54 x 49 cm

Bildformat: 45 x 40 cm

Preis: SFr. 40.- (plus Versandkosten)



Avenches

Aventicum, die Hauptstadt der Schweiz zur Zeit der Helvetier.

Plan de la ville d'Avenches en Suisse et de l'enceinte d'Aventicum Helvetiorum, 1786

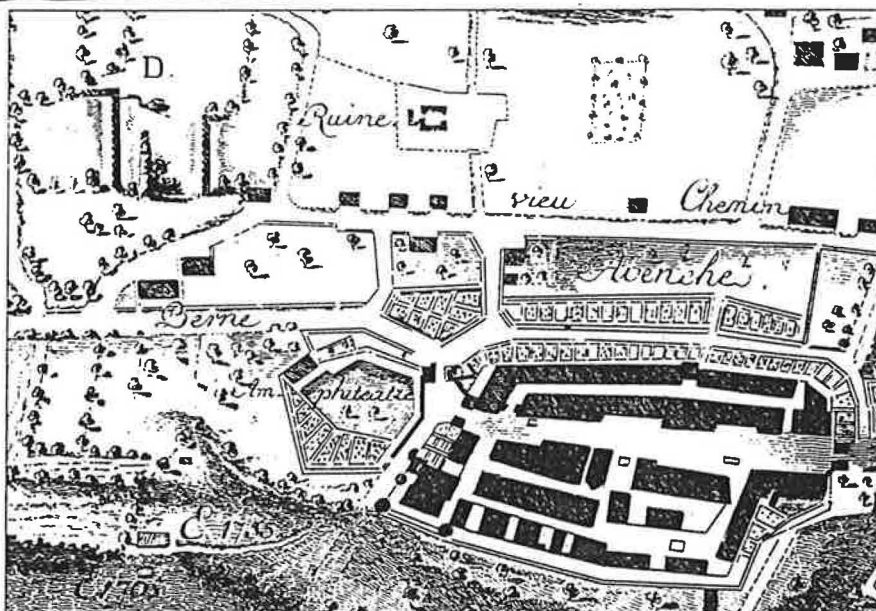
Die Karte dokumentiert den Stand der Sondierungen, die der Berner Architekt Erasmus Ritter in Avenches durchführte. Die Karte zeigt den Umfang der antiken Stadt und vermerkt die öffentlichen Gebäude. Den Kartenstich besorgte der Berner Kupferstecher Matthias Gottfried Eichler.

Faksimile-Ausgabe: einfarbiger Offsetdruck
Büttenpapier 145 g/m²

Kartenformat: 48 x 44 cm

Bildformat: 39 x 35 cm

Preis: SFr. 40.- (plus Versandkosten)



Genf

Der Durchbruch zur modernen Landkarte in der Schweiz.

Carte des environs de Genève
1:48 000, 1776

Die Karte von Henri Mallet gehört zu den besten Leistungen der damaligen Kartographie. Die Kolorierung hebt die Verteilung der Gebiete der selbständigen Republik Genf hervor. Der Kupferstich wurde von Guillaume de la Haye ausgeführt.

Faksimile-Ausgabe: zweifarbiger Offsetdruck, Büttenpapier 145 g/m²

Kartenformat: 74,5 x 52,5 cm

Bildformat: 68 x 46,5 cm

Preis: SFr. 60.- (plus Versandkosten)

